

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 04398 220311Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 VO-05 DODE-00 /056 W
-----074893 220322Z /63

R 200412Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4318
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
INS/CO/WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4398

SECSTATE PASS TO DHA/ORM

BANGKOK PASS TO REF COORD BARNES

HONG KONG PASS TO INS DIDIR FELDMAN

INS/CO CODEP FOR COEXM

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, MY
SUBJ: LOCAL GOM ACCEPTANCE ATTITUDES
REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4355

1. DURING MAY SWEEPS THROUGH CAMPS BY INS/EMBASSY TEAMS, OPPORTUNITIE
S
WERE OFFERED TO GAUGE LOCAL GOM REACTIONS TO APRIL INFLUX OF 3505
NEW ARRIVALS. OBSERVATIONS OFFERD IN FOLLOWING.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KUALA 04398 220311Z

2. FIRST STOP ON MAY TOUR WAS SABAH, NORTH BORNEO. STATE HAD
ACCEPTED 24 REFUGEES ON SINGLE BOAT WHICH HAD ARRIVED IN APRIL.
BOAT FIRST ACCEPTED IN MONTHS. IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUED
SUCH ACCEPTANCES FOR TEMPORATY ASYLUM, AND ANTICIPATION SCANT
THIRD COUNTRY INTEREST IN SMALL NUMBER ISOLATED REFUGEES,
EMB/INS CLEARED ALL FOR U.S. RESETTLEMENT.

3. IN SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY, SABAH STATE SECURITY COMMITTEE, OFFICIAL EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT PROMPT ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES AND PROMISED "COMPLETE COOPERATION" WITH RESIDENT UNHCR REP CONCERNING FUTURE ARRIVALS. EMBOFF MORE ENCOURAGED WHEN SECRETARY DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING LABUAN ISND CAMP TO ACCOMMODATE SUTURE ARRIVALS. LABUAN CAMP CLOSED IN JANUARY, 1978, WHEN LAST OF 200 REFUGEES DEPARTED CAMP FOR RESETTLEMENT IN U.S. AND THIRD COUNTIRES.

4. UNHCR REP, EAST MALAYSIA, RELATED TO EMBOFF THAT HE IS CERTAIN REFUGEE BOATS HAD ARRIVED IN SABAH IN PAST MONTHS. ALTHOUGH LOCAL OFFICIALS DENIED REFUGEES PRESENCE, OTHER SOURCES RELATED TO UNHCR THAT BOATS HAD BEEN REFIGTTED AND SENT ON AS MATTER OF LOCAL POLICY. SABAH'S ACCEPTANCE FOR ASYLUM OF ABOVE MENTIONED 24 REFUGEES FELT BY REP TO BE SIGNIFICANT AND ENCOURAGING.

5. ACCOMPANIED BY UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, EMB/INS TEAM PRO-CEEDED TO KUCHING. THERE, APPROXIMATELY 100 RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES WERE INS CLEARED. AT LEAST ONE BOATLOAD OF REFUGEES AMONG THE 100 HAD RESORTED TO SCUTTLING BEFORE HAVING BEEN GRANTED ASYLUM IN KUCHING, SARAWAK STATE. AGAIN, UNHCR REP CERTAIN OTHER REFUGEE BOATS HAD BEEN REPROVISIONED AND SENT OFF FROM SARAWAK.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KUALA 04398 220311Z

6. STATE SECURITY OFFICIALS SARAWAK WERE ON FIELD TIP TO INLAND AT TIME OF EMB/INS VISIT. LOCAL RED CRESCENT CHIEF AND UNHCR PROMISED TO MEET WITH SECURITY OFFICIALS UPON THEIR RETURN TO KUCHING. MEETING TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK WITH ENCOURAGING RESULTS. TODAY, EMBASSY INFORMED BY SARAWAK CHAPTER MALAYSIAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY (MRCS) THAT BOAT OF 28 REFUGEES ADMITTED TO CAMP AFTER ONLY SLIGHT BUREAUCRATIC DELAY.

7. IN JOHORE STATE, SITE OF PULAU TENGAH ISLAND BOAT REFUGEE CAMP, REFUGEES ENCOUNTER SOME DIFFICULTY IN LANDING. ASUTRAL- IAN OFFICERS REPORT THAT FOUR DAYS AGO, THREE MARINE POLICE LAUNCHES WERE DEPLOYED AT ISALND. WHEN REFUGEE VESSEL ARRIVED, IT WAS SUMMARILY ASKED TO MOVE ON. SPIRITED INTER- CESSION OF UNHCR REP (SAME OFFICER FROM E. MALAYSIA ON TDY TO JOHORE) FACILITATED BOAT'S EVENTUAL ADMISSION. THAT LOCAL FEELING TOWARD REFUGEES AT PULAU TENGAH IS COOLING IS APPARENT.

8. ELSEWHERE, TRENGGANU STATE, SITE OF LARGEST (6,000 PLUS) BOAT REFUGEE CAMP, PULAU BESAR, CONTINUES TO ADMIT REFUGEES. ADMISSIONS ARE SLOWER, HOWEVER, AND THERE ARE STRONG INDICA- TIONS OF SPLIT IN ACCEPTANCE POLICY BETWEEN SECRETARY STATE

SECURITY COMMITTEE AND LOCAL POLICE. SECRETARY FELT TO BE LENIENT, LATTER LINE. RESULT IS THAT WHEN POLICE ENCOUNTER BOATS ALONG SHORELINE, THEY ARE OFTEN NOT REPORTED TO SECRETARY. UNHCR REP TRENGGANU FEELS BOATS, IN SUCH INSTANCES PROBABLY ORDERED TO MOVE ON.

9. KELANTAN STATE (EXTREME N.E. MALAY PENN.) HOST TO 500 RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES, APPARENTLY ADOPTED ATTITUDE OF PUSHING OFF CRAFT NOT IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF FOUNDERING. BOATS ARE INSTRUCTED TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION FURTHER SOUTH AT TRENGGANU. SOME REFUGEES ENCOUNTERED VI ISOLATED POCKETS ALONG KELANTAN COAST CLING TO SMALL PATCHES OF BEACH OR TO TIN, LESS THAN ONE ACRE, ISLANDS WITH VIRTUALLY NO SHELTER. AUSTRALIAN AND U.S. IMMIGRATION OFFICERS HAVE COMBINED INTER-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 KUALA 04398 220311Z

VIEWS OF SUCH DESTITUTE PEOPLE IN ODER TO EXPEDITE ACCEPTANCE. THIS, IN HOPES THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES WOULD BE MOVED TO OFFER ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES.

10. COMMENT: IT APPEARS GOM ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES PRESENTLY HOLDING AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, I.E., ARRIVAL RATE OF 3,000 REFUGEES PER MONTH. (REFTEL) UNHCR SPREAD VERY THIN. GOODWILL OF LOCAL SOURCES, USUALLY MRCS, BEST ASSET IN LOCATING ISOLATED REFUGEES. ONCE REFUGEES' PRESENCE AT GIVEN LOCATION CONFIRMED BY UNHCR, CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT LOCAL AUTHORITES WILL ADMIT THEM.
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